



NEWSLETTER

January 10, 2025

Principal: Barbara Gerard
<http://matsuk12.us/acc>

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Dear Academy Families,

UPDATE on the Construction of the High School Facility

Over the past three years, significant time and energy have been devoted to securing funding for this project, so it is normal to feel impatient with the seemingly slow-moving pieces and parts of bureaucracy. However, significant progress is underway! We are narrowing the scope of work, preparing for the pre-bid Design-Build meeting. The pre-bid Design Build meeting allows interested contractors to tour our existing facility, ask detailed questions, and gather important information to aid them as they build their proposals. We are engaging in discussions with the Borough Team to finalize the plan and timeline. These efforts are critical steps toward bringing our high school to life!

Today, Austin Grimes is visiting Liberty Commons High School in Fort Collins, Colorado. Her itinerary includes a campus tour, discussions with curriculum specialists, and a working lunch with their principals. The day will be filled with valuable opportunities to glean exceptional practices and methodologies that we can incorporate into our high school. I'm eagerly looking forward to unpacking the insights and knowledge she brings back from this visit! We are deeply grateful to Liberty Commons for their warm hospitality and willingness to share the key elements behind their remarkable success and outstanding achievements! It is with purposeful effort and careful consideration that we are maximizing every avenue as we design the MOST AMAZING, TOP-NOTCH COLLEGE-PREPATORY, CLASSICAL HIGH SCHOOL!

Here's a couple of snippets from their website:

(<https://www.libertycommon.org/our-school/high-school>)

Serving both junior-high and high-school students, Liberty Common High School is a tuition-free, public institution that offers a college-preparatory, classical, liberal-arts curriculum accentuating the humanities with a strong emphasis upon math, science, and engineering. Liberty Common School juniors deliver Colorado's atypical SAT scores, ranking #1 in the Poudre School District and in the top five schools in Colorado out of over 600 high-school entities. This stunning achievement is only possible due to consistently delivered, expert-level instruction by professional classroom instructors. The time-tested classical model achieves these aims through a curriculum that emphasizes the histories, literary works, and achievements that shape our society and inform our understanding of what it is to live a meaningful life. It challenges students to master the works and subject matters of Western civilization's greatest thinkers. In the true and original sense of the liberal arts, it provides an education that is fitting for free men and women, and that fits them to be free. It prepares youth to become flourishing individuals capable of personal self-governance. It fortifies the foundations for political self-governance in our Republic, so that future generations may profit from its strength and longevity.

January	
Date:	Event:
1/20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day No School
1/22	Spanish Mercado

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Paradigm Shift in Action! Stay the Course!

Attendance, Punctuality, Timeliness, and Dependability!

A HUGE thank you to each and every family for your dedication and effort in ensuring students arrive at school ON TIME! We are thrilled to report a 98% improvement in punctuality, with students arriving before 7:40 AM and no later than 7:45 am. This incredible progress has allowed classrooms to begin instruction promptly, with minimal to no late arrivals!!

YES! Keep up the fantastic work—together, we're making a difference!

****Beginning this Monday, January 13, any student arriving after 7:45 a.m. must be signed in by a parent. Parents will be required to provide their signature, along with the date and time, before the student is allowed to proceed to class. This process will ensure accurate documentation of student arrival times and provide reliable data for future reference. We apologize for the inconvenience.**

Thank you for your time, effort, and the energy to ensure your child arrives on time! Thank you for helping to encourage punctuality, timeliness, attendance, and dependability. Once again, keep up the fantastic work—together, we're making an important paradigm shift! By instilling these habits, we are equipping these students with the essential skills to ensure future workplace success! Let's keep this momentum going! We got this!

With Warm Regards,

Barbara Gerard, Principal

907-841-5704

Barbara.Gerard@matsuk12.us

Looking for **Parent**
Volunteers!

- Morning car helper needed! We are looking for two volunteers to help students out of cars each morning, 7:20-7:45am
- Wednesday Library Helpers needed! 12:15-1:30pm. Please contact Molly at 503-839-7667
- Clean light covers in classroom
- Fix/replace blinds in Mrs. Kramer's room
- Caulk window sill in Spanish classroom



Picture from Tour of Nova Classical High School in Minneapolis.



Welcome back! Kindergarten dreamed of snow as we read stories about snowmen. We had a lot of fun activities around that theme as well. Our new sounds are WH and ED as in lifted,

climbed and jumped. We practiced some with making sentences this week and added ten more words to our Spalding spelling books.

During our math block we began learning about money. So far, we have been talking about coins and practiced naming and counting pennies and nickels. We will continue with more coins next week.

Just a few more tidbits: Friday, January 10 students switched rooms. Permission slips for our AKJT trip went home this week. We need volunteers. Please sign up to help for a Thursday activity time or a Friday lunch time. Thank you!

Feel free to contact me anytime.

Mrs. Berg Verona.Berg@matsuk12.us



Welcome back! Holy cow - your kiddos blossomed over break, and we have not skipped a beat by jumping in right where we left off last year!

We have talked a lot about becoming VORACIOUS readers ... “gobbling” up books as much as they can. Most students have ownership of our reading strategies for accuracy, but we are moving into fluency. Practice is the number one way to be able to read like we talk, and when they can do that, their comprehension will naturally go up too. In math, we have been challenging students to balance equations that have both addition and subtraction number sentences, requiring lots of focus and flexibility. They all did great!

Contact us anytime!

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond

Betsy.Mayer@matsuk12.us

Jessica.Drummond@matsuk12.us



Welcome back! We are so glad to see everyone back at school after Christmas break and are getting back into the swing of things.

Please remember to send a water bottle with your child each day to help them stay hydrated and ready to learn.

In language arts, we’ve been practicing Rule 7 and working with silent final e’s, along with lots of reading, reading, reading! The students are making great progress and building confidence in their skills.

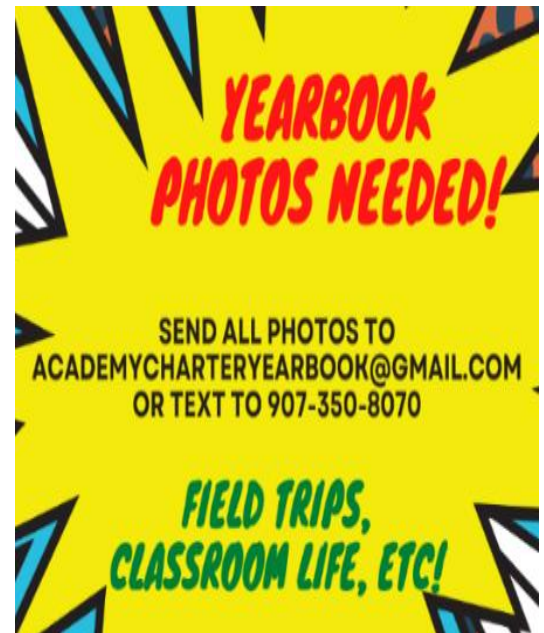
In math, we’re reviewing three-digit subtraction this week. Next week we will start our money unit.

It’s shaping up to be a fantastic start to the new semester, and we are excited for all the learning ahead!

Mrs. Saunders & Mrs. Kramer

Erin.Saunders@matsuk12.us

Kimberly.Kramer@matsuk12.us



Grade 3

Kile's Kittlets

It is good to be back in the classroom together. This week, we continued with our Spalding and writing skills. We are also working on identifying common and proper nouns. For the remainder of the year, all students in my class must write only in cursive.

In math, we played multiple games to practice multiplication and division. Students are becoming fluent in both. We have finished 0-12 facts and are moving on to understanding equations and how to express them.

Tamela Kile Tamela.Kile@matsuk12.us

Grimes Gambit

Language Arts (LA): What a great first week back! This week, we began Unit 5: *Adventures in Light and Sound*. The chapters your student will read this week include information about what light is, how shadows are made, and mirrors and reflections. Be sure to ask your student each evening about what they are learning. We also began practicing cursive! Next week, we will write everything in cursive.

Math: This week, we have conquered our multiples of 6. We played various games to solidify our multiplication and division skills. We have also worked on our ALEKS, and students are excited to work on various assignments on Prodigy.

Mrs. Grimes austin.grimes@matsuk12.us



FOURTH GRADE

Nielsen's News:

ELA- We have embarked on our study of the American Revolution! This week we read all about the causes of the war and some early events preceding the actual battles (The Boston Massacre and The Boston Tea Party). We started a different approach to grammar this semester. We will be focusing on one specific skill instead of the Daily Language Reviews. Keep a look out for End of Week Quick Check Assessments to come home starting next week. This week's focus was sentence fragments and making them complete sentences. Our focus for writing in this unit will be to write an informational text focusing on cause and effect.

Reading goal: They've read 30,520 of the 77,500. Awesome reading over break! Keep reading!!

Math- This week's focus was review of mixed numbers, improper fractions, simplifying fractions and then learning to multiply fractions by whole numbers. Keep an eye out for the Check My Progress quick assessment. They did great. I apologize we didn't do math fluency homework this week. We will start next week for those not finished with division yet.

Mrs. Nielsen laurie.nielsen@matsuk12.us

Benbow's Buzz

I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday break! I will admit, it was a bit of a struggle to pry myself from a cozy slumber on Monday morning, but it was so worth it to see my class again!

Our supply cabinet is running low on paper plates, boxes of tissue and dry erase markers. Please grab them if you think about it while you're out and about!

While gathering all of the fabric and materials for our placemat projects for Family Feast and our community service project with Kids Kupboard, I spent \$250. Any donations toward that fund would be appreciated! (Thank you, Megan Galbraith, for sending money!)

Language Arts - We are beginning our unit on the American Revolution! Over the next few weeks, we will read Johnny Tremain, create pocket style books with so much information about our nation's creation and work our way through the Core Knowledge reader and activity pages. We worked on transitions, relative pronouns, relative adverbs, order of adjectives and sentence editing as part of our Daily Language Review.

Math - This week we worked toward remembering that we understand fractions! After dusting away the cobwebs and regaining our thoughts, we moved on to adding and subtracting fractions! We will build on this knowledge next week as we work on improper fractions and mixed numbers. We have been taking time to review previous content, and I continue to see students struggling with basic math facts. Automatic recall of the basic multiplication facts is absolutely vital to success in fourth grade math, especially now that we have reached division and are beginning fractions soon. Although we will practice multiplication facts every day in class, I do encourage you to make sure that your child finds time at home every day to practice as well.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns!
cherie.benbow@matsuk12.us



SCHUMACHER MATH

Math class this week assessed their ALEKS topic mastery. We continued a fraction and decimal application on Mathopoly cards this week. We made progress on a statistics project for class height report.

Mr. Schumacher Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us



5TH GRADE



The Manley Minute:

Language Arts: During Spalding this week, we entered 30 words into our notebooks and reviewed rules 10 and 26. Ask your student to explain these rules to you! We have also begun our unit on the Renaissance. We learned that the word Renaissance means “rebirth” and focused on the factors that influenced the Renaissance. The students are eager to learn more!

Math: This week we focused on reviewing decimal operations and long division. Students practiced adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing decimals as well as applying them to real world word problems. These foundational skills will be beneficial as we move into more advanced mathematical concepts. They are making great progress!

Mrs. Manley Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us

Sturgis Super Students!

Language Arts--Welcome to a New Year! We are jumping right into more spelling practice and will be focusing on using syllabication. As we worked through our words this week, many students realized that there were only a few tricky parts once they broke a word into syllables. Our first test will be on Wednesday. Due to all of the days off or activities 2nd semester test days may move around. Students will still have a week to study words (including a weekend) with the exception of review lists.

Our first unit of the New Year is on the Renaissance. As we work through this unit, we will continue to work on reading comprehension and using the information in the text to answer questions.

Math--We are kicking off 2nd semester with a chapter on number patterns. This week we looked at properties of addition and multiplication and used the order of operations (PEMDAS) to solve problems with multiple operations.

Mrs. Sturgis Sabra.Sturgis@matsuk12.us

Outdoor Fitness

Outdoor fitness classes worked and played with Miss Molly this week. Think snow!

Mr. Schumacher Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us

Mrs. Molly Molly.Nichols@matsuk12.us



K-5 Lab Classes



Welcome Back!

What a great first week back with our kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade students! It has been a joy to see everyone's enthusiasm for art as we dive into exciting projects. We also switched lab groups, and it's been wonderful getting to know the students in each of the new groups. Here's a peek at what each grade is working on:

Kindergarten: Our youngest artists are exploring warm and cool colors by creating vibrant color circles. This project helps them identify and understand the emotional impact of colors while building their foundational art skills.

First Grade: First graders are putting their creativity to work by designing geometric-shaped robots. They're learning how to use basic shapes to build unique and imaginative figures while strengthening their understanding of geometry in art.

Second Grade: Second graders have been busy with two exciting projects. They're creating symmetry sculptures that teach balance and design, as well as colorful chalk owls that bring out their expressive side. These projects help reinforce their understanding of symmetry and enhance their fine motor skills.

Thank you for your continued support of our art program. We look forward to seeing the amazing creations our students will produce this semester!

Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Grimes



Español with Señorita
Catarina



Our intermediate students hit the ground running during this short week. We are being introduced to Bolivia - the country of extremes. Third and fourth graders learned the lengths students in Bolivia have to go to just to get to school. It was eye opening to see how education is valued all over the world and the sacrifices all families make to ensure their children have every opportunity available to them. Fifth graders are working on their Global Community Service Project benefitting the animals and ecosystem of Bolivia.



Third and Fourth grade are learning to use spreadsheets this round. Third grade is learning to read, enter and analyze data. Fourth grade did research for creating timelines on sheets. Fifth grade is finishing publishing posters for phonogram rules using Canvas.

Mrs. Nielsen



Welcome back! We are delving into the physical sciences for K-2 science this month. Kindergarten gets an intro to physics with our Pushes and Pulls unit featuring a DIY pinball machine, while 1st grade explores how levers, pulleys, and the like make work easier in our Simple Machines unit. The 2nd graders take things a step further in Electricity and Magnetism, building an electric circuit and investigating how these forces work. Happy New Year!

Ms. Heppner & Mr. Nick

Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us

Nicholas.Treinen@matsuk12.us



Kindergarten - Exploring and Moving to America - Christopher Columbus and the Pilgrims.

1st grade - 13 Colonies to Independence - Boston Tea Party.

2nd grade - War of 1812 - causes.

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond



3rd, 4th, and 5th have started their poetry section. This is always a fun unit.

Ms. Kile



Middle School Spanish

Sixth graders are working with La Cortesia - courteous words in Spanish. Although these words are introduced in the middle of our introductory Spanish middle school textbook - they are some of the most important communicative words one can learn. Mistakes are

easy to overlook and understanding easier to achieve when people communicating do their utmost to treat each other with courtesy.

Seventh graders are working Tener and parts of the house vocabulary. As always, we start our semester with a clean slate and a great attitude. We recognize that we earn lower grades when we do less work, study less for tests, and participate less in class. Conversely, we are assured of more success when we study for tests, do quality work and participate thoughtfully in class.

Eighth grade Spatulas are reviewing regular Verb conjugations and carbo loading with breads, etc vocabulary. Eighth grade Sporks are working with e-ie boot verb vocabulary words and grammatical concepts. Both groups are playing games that increase the spontaneity of their Spanish sentences and utterances. Both groups are also working on a Hispanic American Christmas traditions slideshow that is due Monday.



Señorita Cady.Agoff@matsuk12.us



Welcome back! We are geared up for a stellar second semester!

Mrs. Williams's Language Arts class is focusing on writing skills. Primarily, we will be focusing on responding to reading passages and constructing strong, evidence-based responses. We will be starting book groups on Monday. The work will be done primarily in class as the books are borrowed and should not leave the classroom.

In Math, we have started Chapter 7: Equations. As a reminder, all ALEKS time and topics is completed in class and students should expect to have homework daily.

Mrs. Zerkel's Language Arts is reading a new novel: Refugee. They have been annotating and preparing for Harness discussions. They also continue to work on Spelling and Grammar rules

In Math, the students have concluded working with positive and negative integers and will be starting Chapter 7: Equations.

For science, we have begun our unit on Astronomy. Students will be learning about the gravity, types of stars, different galaxies, and constellations.

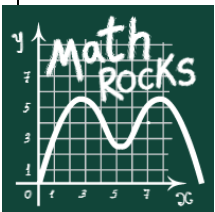


Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Zerkel Amanda.Williams@matsuk12.us Katherine.Zerkel@matsuk12.us



This semester is being kicked off with a look at the three levels of government: National, State, and Local. Next week the students will have a test on the three levels, then we will look into the three branches of government in preparation for our trip to Juneau.

Mrs. Sturgis Sabra.Sturgis@matsuk12.us



Happy New Year! My sixth graders are back at it (with a slight interruption for an ice day!), diving into a unit on positive and negative numbers, absolute value, and graphing on the coordinate plane. Remember that homework goes home every day except Friday and is due the following day. Our in-class goal is to complete 15 ALEKS topics every week, and most students can complete those topics in class most of the time. If your child is absent, he/she should complete 3 topics at home to catch up. Thanks for a great start to the new semester!

Ms. Heppner Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us

7TH GRADE

Wrights Winners!



Many thanks to our debate judges last semester - Stephanie Nowers, Glenn Shidner and Peter Kopperud. We appreciated their time and expertise!

Wright 7th LA: Students will focus on characteristics of fiction this semester, learning vocabulary and applying story elements into diagrams and their understanding of summary. They'll contrast author's purpose in various types of storytelling - from short stories to podcasts to script writing. They started off identifying elements of plot through diagramming. This segued into building a quote sheet in preparation for a story-to-screen adaptation group project. Their first Harkness table discussed the impact of family relationships in the classic short story, "The Monkey's Paw" by WW Jacobs. Reader notebooks are due each Monday.

Wright 7th math: Chapter 7's focus on operations in algebraic expressions is foundational to this year's math concepts, as is Chapter 8. Students began their individual math history project presentations, scheduled weekly. Ten ALEKS topics are due each Monday as well.

Wright 7th history: A review of the Treaty of Versailles, and a look at the events of 1919-1920 took up the week. Students researched the 18th and 19th amendments, as well as Spanish Influenza, which decimated a world weakened by war. They chose a suffragette for their podcast project and will begin researching next week. Their notes and a Gimkit weekend practice should set them up for success on a quiz Monday.

Mrs. Wright Melodie.Wright@matsuk12.us

"New year—a new chapter, new verse, or just the same old story? Ultimately, we write it. The choice is ours. – Alex Morritt

I hope you all enjoyed the winter break and time with family and friends over the holidays. It's hard to believe that the year is halfway done!

This week in English, students resumed skill-building with our daily language review, daily paragraph editing, and daily reading comprehension passages, working with character, setting, and theme. They demonstrated their spelling and meaning knowledge of vocabulary with the root "bio" and were assigned 10 more words with the roots "viv, vit." We continued reading Chapter 7 and began Chapter 8 of All Quiet on the Western Front. Students read along as they listened to the audiobook. Pauses were taken to discuss the plot, characters, setting, and make connections.

In Math, students continued working in Chapter 1. They learned, practiced, and were assessed on the concepts of Lessons 8 (Slope) and 9 (Direct Variation). Students began their review of the chapter's lessons 1-9, ensured vocabulary and notes (examples) were entered in their notebooks, and worked in ALEKS. The summative assessments for Chapter 1 will be next week. Please encourage your child to support Chapter 1's content in ALEKS by working in the "**Ratios, Proportions, and Measurement**" pie. What students are introduced to and practice at home will enhance understanding in class. Remember, students are expected to complete TEN topics each week, at a minimum.

Students in History resumed practicing using an atlas to answer various world geography questions and finished the WWI unit. Students looked at the challenges of making peace during the final months of the Great War, Wilson's Fourteen Points, Armistice in WWI, the Treaty of Versailles, and the League of Nations. Students began preparing for the summative assessment that is scheduled for Monday through review and recording answers to test questions on slides. All answers were given in class Thursday to support studying. Students also watched episodes of student-friendly news, catching up on current events.

Together, this will be a great 7th-grade year!

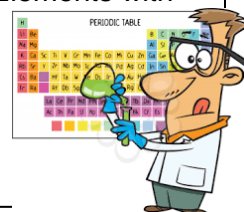
Ms. Twohy

Tuesday.Twohy@matsuk12.us



2025 Begins a new unit in science! We are studying physical and chemical properties of matter, and how they can be changed. This week we lost ½ of our science time due to the changes in the weather, a physical change! We were able to conduct an experiment on Thursday classifying objects by their physical properties. I dare say the marshmallow was the most popular object! I've challenged the students to memorize the first 36 elements on the Periodic Table of Elements with their name and symbols. Throughout this unit they will be taking quizzes until they learn them at 100% accuracy. I look forward to introducing the students to this new branch in their science education.

Mrs. Dunham Susan.Dunham@matsuk12.us





Happy 2025! It's hard to believe we are already in the 2nd semester and in the New Year. Things are already getting so very busy but that is a great thing!

My math class has spent some time reviewing our two-step equations material, that we were working on prior to the break. This integral topic combines everything we've learned thus far by applying it to these larger equations. It is imperative that the students have this material down to be successful in their future math endeavors. Please keep in mind, the students' ALEKS is always available to them at home and even 20 minutes at a time does wonder to keep math skills sharp.

The English I students launched into our *Heroes, Myths and Legends* unit and we will begin reading Homer's Odyssey next week. Additionally we are diving into the narrative known as the Hero's Journey. Each student will be writing his/her own Hero's Journey narrative this semester as well.

In second semester History, we will begin with a focus on the history of China to include an overview of the dynastically structure, Chinese culture and traditions, and learning about the infamous Chinese dictator, Mao Zedong. While Americans are often very knowledgeable about the likes of Hitler and Stalin, Western knowledge of Mao is limited at best, yet he continues to sit at the top of numerous "Worst Dictators in World History."



Please also remind your child to come to school every Monday for Outdoor Fitness! The students must have appropriate gear to be outside or they will need to call home for those items to be brought to them. We can all agree it would be much easier if they arrive at school prepared. Furthermore, all students must come to school on Fridays prepared to change for indoor fitness. Thank you!

Have a safe & fantastic weekend,

Mrs. Molina

Stacy.Molina@matsuk12.us

Manley's Minute:

8th Grade LA

Before break, students finished writing their persuasive essays. This week, students used "My Bib" to create a bibliography using a variety of different types of texts as well as the resources used to write their essays. We also introduced our new historical fiction novel *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck. This novel takes readers on a journey through rural China in the early 20th century, following the life of Wang Lung, a poor farmer, and his rise to wealth and influence.

Mrs. Manley

Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us



This week we begin our look into Parabolas and the quadratic equation. This is a hard concept to understand but they are rocking it! I am very happy with the progress we are making!



In Science this week we are finishing our look into light waves with a very interesting discussion on whether a specific species of crab can see the plankton they eat or if they rely on their other senses to find their food.

Mr. Farring Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us